Structured Small Group Template

In Charge

**Goal/Purpose:**

Upon completion of this group, the student will be able to identify their feelings, particularly in regards to their parent’s deployment, and then process them appropriately in varied challenging life situations. Students will be prepared to share their identified feelings appropriately and understand how their emotions affect themselves and others.

Upon completion of this program, the student will be able to identify and appropriately process and exhibit their emotions, particularly in regards to their parent’s deployment. The student will be equipped with behavior management and coping skills that will enable them to express themselves appropriately.

**Population:**

This group will be for male and female students, ages 8-10, who have a parent currently deployed in the military. The group will serve between five to seven students. The focus of this group will be to equip students with the skills to identify their emotions associated with the changes from their parent’s deployment and then process the emotions in a safe environment.

**Rationale/Need:**

Expressed Need: In a military city, many families and students are affected by changes that occur due to deployment. When students have changes in their home stability, they often will have a change in emotions and behaviors that make it difficult to focus in school. Because of this instability and transition, many students will struggle and do poorly in academics. (US Department of Education, 2005). The support and stability of the school, particularly a group designed for students with deployed parents, will provide the opportunity for students to understand their emotions and develop coping skills, which will further their academic achievement.

In this program, the PD will review the past five school year’s data on students with parents in the military and then further review the number of students that had a parent deploy in the school year. These will enable the program developer to assess how many students had parents deploy and if there were any effects on the students’ behavior and/or academic achievement. The program developer will then review the current year’s student records to determine how many students have parents that list the military as their current primary profession. The final data source will be a questionnaire given to teachers which will inquire how many students they have that currently have parents that are deployed and how many students have parents that will most likely be deployed within the school year. This questionnaire will request that teachers include behavioral changes or problems that are currently occurring that may be related to a parent’s deployment.

**Theoretical Orientation:**

This program is based primarily on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. The reason for this is to enable students to understand their thoughts and the impact that their thoughts have on their daily behavior. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy encourages clients to focus on their thought processes and how those thoughts affect their behavior. Previous research has shown that some children exhibit behavioral problems such as acting out, being disobedient, or having aggressive tendencies while other children may experience anxiety and fear due to the familial changes (Mitchum, 1991). By integrating a Cognitive Behavioral approach, the professional school counselor can help students identify their emotions and thoughts and then work through behavioral management techniques.

**Ethical, Legal, and Multicultural Issues:**

When working with young students, it is important to have the support of their parent through an Informed Consent. The Informed Consent will be given to parents along with a document detailing the goal and objectives of this group. The informational document will also include the role of confidentiality in the group and what the looks like for the parent, student, and the school counselor. Parents will be asked to sign and return the Informed Consent once they have had time to carefully review it. The school counselor will discuss the Informed Consent form with students at the beginning of the group and explain to them what it means and how confidentiality will be expected.

In this group, the school counselor will be working with students who have parents that have dedicated their life to defending the freedom of the United States of America. It is important to be aware of how some students may view their parent’s commitment and how their peers may perceive it. This could cause issues for students who feel they need to defend their parent’s military lifestyle to other children outside of the group.

In regards to multicultural issues, some of the students in the group may have lived on base in other parts of the world, giving them multicultural roots that are not obvious immediately. The school counselor would make a wise decision to bring this topic up and discuss with students, particularly as they may not be aware of certain multicultural customs that they unconsciously adhere to.

**Recruitment & Screening:**

Students will be chosen for this through a multi-step process. Initially, the professional school counselor will send out a letter to the teacher asking for a list of students that currently have parents deployed in the military. Once this list has been established, a letter will be sent to parents that their child has been selected to potentially participate in the group. The letter will request the permission of the parent to screen the student for compatibility in the group. Once permission has been granted from the parent, the school counselor will meet with each student individually during the second recess break of the day to assess them and determine whether they would be a good fit for the group. Inclusion criteria would be that students must have a parent actively deployed or preparing to deploy in a few weeks. Exclusion criteria would include students who are already being treated with some other form of counseling. Other exclusions would be students who have exhibited physically aggressive behavior, either before or after the parent has been deployed. Students who are not chosen for this group would be encouraged to pursue suggested referrals by the school counselor as needed.

**Structure:**

This psychoeducational group is a six week closed group that will meet once a week for six weeks. Each session will last forty minutes, from 1:30-2:10 pm during the student’s second recess break. The group will meet in the music room. This group will be offered twice during the school year on an as needed basis.

**Core ASCA Standards:**

AA.2.3. Use communication skills to know when and how to ask for help.

AA.3.1. Take responsibility for their actions

AB1.2. Learn and apply critical thinking skills

A.B1.4. Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family, and peers.

C.C2.2. Learn how to use conflict management skills with peers and adults.

PS.A1.5. Identify and express feelings.

PS.A1.6. Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

PS.A1.12. Identify and recognize changing family roles.

PS.A2.6. Use effective communication skills.

PS.C1.11. Learn coping skills for managing life events.

**Core State Academic Standards.**

**Grade Three**

CCR-Writing

1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
2. Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create and organizational structure that lists reasons.
3. Provide reasons that support the opinion.
4. Use linking words and phrases (e.g. because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinions and reasons.
5. Provide a concluding statement or section.

CCR- Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCR- Speaking and Listening

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

b. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussion (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion.

c. Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments with the remarks of others.

d. Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to identify and name the four primary emotions of mad, sad, happy, and scared.

When feeling overwhelmed, the student will be able to identify their primary emotion.

Students will know how to verbalize their emotions and then know how to express that to family, teachers, and peers.

Student will be able to state what behaviors have negative consequences.

Students will know multiple effective coping skills.

Students will utilize coping skills when dealing with stressors.

**Program Evaluation:**

This program will be evaluated through two assessments, the Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist and the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. The Child Behavior Checklist will be given to parents and teacher of the child to be filled out and returned to the school counselor before and after the group counseling program. The Self-Esteem Inventory will be taken by the child before and after the group counseling program. Both inventories will be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the program.

**Session 1**

**Title: “**In Charge”

**Brief Summary of Session:** During this session, students will discuss different emotions and share times when they have felt emotions. Students will identify ways to appropriately share their emotions.

**Theoretical Orientation:** Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (Mitchum, 1991)

**Specific Group Technique:** Discussion, Roleplay

**Duration:** 40 minutes

**Materials/ Media:** “Feelings” Chart & Feelings Situation Papers

**Core ASCA Standard(s):**

PS.A1.F. Identify and express feelings.

PS.A1.6. Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

PS.A2.6. Use effective communication skills.

**Core State Academic Standard(s):**

CCR- Speaking and Listening

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

b. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussion (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion.

c. Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments with the remarks of others.

d. Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

**Objectives:**

When feeling overwhelmed, the student will be able to identify their primary emotion 75% of the time. (PS.A1.F. Identify and express feelings)

In an emotionally stimulating social situation, the student will verbalize their feelings with only one prompt from the adult in charge. (PS.A2.6. Use effective communication skills)

In a discussion, the student will be able to explain what they are feeling without acting out inappropriately 75% of the time. (CCR- Speaking and Listening, 1.d., PS.A1.6. Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior)

**Assessments**: Verbal Likert scale of how students are “feeling” before and after session.

**Procedures/ Instructional Strategy:**

**Opening:**

**PSC:** Welcome everyone, thank them for coming to group today.

**Icebreaker**: Highs/Lows (High of the week, low of the week)(8 minutes)

**Introduction**: Today, we are going to be talking about our feelings. Can anyone tell me some different kinds of feelings? (Happy, angry, sad, embarrassed, frustrated, etc.) (2 minutes)

**Education**: When we talk about feelings, we need to know that all feelings are okay. It’s okay to feel mad that your dad isn’t home and it’s okay to feel sad that your mom doesn’t know how to make your favorite snack that dad always makes for you. All feelings are okay. Today we are going to talk about what to do with our feelings. (1 minute)

**Activity:** Feeling chart- Pass the paper with feeling faces on it. Point to a face and describe a time in the past week that you have felt that face. Explain what made you feel that way and what you did when you felt that way. (8 minutes)

**Transition to discussion:** (Discussion- 15 minutes)

Do all feelings feel good? Do all feel bad? What are examples of feelings that are good? Bad?

Tell me different ways that you might show your feelings.(Ex: Yelling, Throwing things, crying, Laughing, etc.)

Does the way that you show your feelings ever affect someone else? (Parents, teachers, siblings, friends)

Does the way that you show your feelings ever hurt someone else?

What can you do instead of these things? (Tell your mom how you feel, do something different, write in a journal, draw a picture of what you are feeling)

Let’s brainstorm some things we can do when we are having lots of feelings that we don’t know what to do with.

**Roleplay:** With a partner, pick a “feeling” situation and then each take turns sharing how to handle that situation. (5 minutes)

**Homework/ Ownwork**: This week, when you start to feel angry/sad/confused or any other emotion, write it down in a journal. Write down what happened to make you feel this way and whether you like feeling this way. Then write down how you want to feel and what you can do to feel that way. (2 minutes)

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues:**

This part of the group stage will begin to reveal how students are coping with their parent being gone. By talking about feelings, students may begin to realize why they are always angry at their mom or why they feel like crying all the time. At this point in the group it is important to help students know that it’s okay to feel this way, but that they can feel better about it. This will begin the real work within the group and can be very emotional for students.

**Session 2**

**Title:** Coping Skills

**Duration:** 40 minutes

**Brief Summary of Session:** In this session, students will review the past session discussing emotions and how emotions affect coping skills. During the session, students will be taught what coping skills are and how to use them.

**Theoretical Orientation:** Cognitive Behavioral & Solutions- Based Therapy

**Specific Group Technique:** Discussion

**Materials/ Media:** Journals, Paper, Pen, Markers, Musical Instruments, Paint, Soothing Music

**Core ASCA Standard(s):**

PS.A1.5. Identify and express feelings

PS.A1.6. Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

PS.A1.8. Understand the need for self-control and how to practice it.

PS.C1.11 Learn coping skills for managing life events.

**Core State Academic Standard(s):**

Ohio CCR

CCR: Reading 3- Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

CCR: Writing: 1.Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

a. Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.

b. Provide reasons that support the opinion.

c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., *because*, *therefore*, *since*, *for example*) to connect opinion and reasons.

d. Provide a concluding statement or section.

**Objectives:** Taking into consideration Mager’s (1997) 3 components and issues; Dick, Carey, and Carey’s steps to writing an effective objective, as well as additional reading and research you have done for this course, write at least two measurable objectives for the session. At minimum, the objectives have 3 components in which Mager (1997) identified: 1) Performance, 2) Conditions, 3) Criterion. Make sure that the objectives align with school counseling and state academic standards. Next to each objective provide indication of the state and school counseling standards via the standard number in which the goal aligns. The objectives should be written in list form.

**Assessments**: The school counselor will gauge the atmosphere of students and do a verbal Likert scale before and after session to determine whether students feel they have an activity they can do when they have feelings they don’t want or don’t know what to do with.

**Procedures/ Instructional Strategy:**

**Intro:** Welcome everyone. Ask for previous session’s own work and discuss. (5 min)

**Icebreaker:** High/Low (5 min)

**Topic:** Last week we talked about our feelings. Does anyone remember some feelings that they had throughout the week that they would like to share? Transition: We are going to keep talking about our feelings, but this week we are going to talk about what to do with our feelings when we are upset/sad/angry/mad, etc. Intro to coping skills. Does anyone have something that they do when they are having feelings they don’t like? (Examples) Today we are going to try some new things that might help us with our feelings. (3 minutes)

Activity: Above materials will be set out in stations. Students will be sent to different stations to “try out” that coping skill. Stations: Drawing, Journaling, Painting, Playing Instruments. Students will be at each station for five minutes. (Each station will have students at it the whole time- they will rotate between them)

Discussion: After students have finished with stations, Discuss what stations they liked and what ones they didn’t. Then ask what other ideas they have about things they can do when they are upset. (This has been discussed at beginning of session, but they may be able to come up with more ideas after experiencing some activities) (5 minutes)

Closing: After giving “ownwork” play the soothing song as students are preparing to leave. Instruct them to think about how the music makes them feel and if that could be something they could listen to when they are having feelings they don’t want to have.

**Homework/ Ownwork**: Own Work: This week, write down the things that you do that make you feel better to bring back to class. Then we will talk about why these things help and give ideas to others to share.

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues:** Need to be prepared that some students may have unhealthy coping mechanisms that they do not realize. They also may be aware of unhealthy coping skills that they see in their family that may need to be processed.

**References**

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